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lives for some years with a European may leave him and enter into a proper marriage. The favourite wife of a chief who died a few years ago had earlier been the mistress of a European.

Christians must abide by the rules of their church or risk ecclesiastical censure. A baptized Catholic man may marry only a Catholic girl or he will be suspended from receiving the sacraments. A Catholic woman must either marry a baptized Catholic or obtain dispensation to marry a catechumen. A catechumen of either sex can marry another catechumen or a pagan. In addition Catholics cannot marry if the marriage would infringe canon law. Catholic cross-cousins, therefore, can marry only by concealing their relationship from the priest. In the Dutch Reformed Church a baptized person, or a member of a class of instruction, cannot marry a pagan or a Catholic without being suspended. Other missions have similar rules.

Locality is of some importance in influencing a man's choice. The bigger the village he lives in the more likely he is to take a wife from within it, but the belief still persists that it is better to find a wife from outside one's own village if possible. In a polygynous household a wife married from her husband's own village still does not rank as high as one who has been brought in from outside, of whom it is said 'her husband had to walk to get her'. The mechanisms by which people living in different villages are brought into contact are numerous,[4] but for finding a spouse the two most important are inter-village dance contests and visits to relatives. Teams of young people, usually all girls and young women, go from their own village to others in the vicinity to dance against the home teams. Young men stand around watching them and discuss among themselves the erotic possibilities of individual dancers. As darkness falls the dancers start back home, escorted by the young men who flirt with them on the way. At the weekends there are many young men back in the villages from their employment on the farms or in Fort Jameson and they sometimes gather into gangs of half-a-dozen or so, wandering from village to village in their best clothes, with dark glasses and walking sticks, looking at the girls' dances and trying to make assignations. This sort of flirtation is confined to the young and irresponsible, and it would be regarded as unseemly for a middle-aged man to pay much attention to the dances of young girls.

More respectable contacts are made by young people who go off to stay with their relatives in distant villages. Everyone has kinsmen and affines in many different villages, and it is the custom to visit back and forth for weeks at a time. A young man may go on several days journey to visit his relatives among the Cewa and Nsenga tribes, or to live for a while with a relative working on a distant farm. While he is away, he may meet a girl whom he likes, and arrange to marry her. The dance situation does not provide

[4] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 214 ff

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586 court. Women whose husbands have threatened them with divorce often bring the matter to court so that the divorce may be ratified 692 and their grievance brought to light, or in the hope that they may be awarded damages for cruelty. If a woman does not wish to be divorced she may hope that the court will persuade her husband to take her back. In some areas where the Native Court is powerful, divorces are referred to it even after they have been agreed to in the village. The Dutch Reformed Church Mission sometimes allows divorce, but its members first seek divorce in the Native courts [994] and then, when the divorce has been granted, apply to the Mission for divorce in the eyes of the Church.

586 After a quarrel between a man and his wife he may give her a present of sixpence or a shilling and tell her that she is divorced and must go home. This act does not of itself constitute a certain divorce unless the man takes no steps to persuade her to return after she has stayed at her own village for a month or more. If the man does not go to her kinsfolk to apologize and ask them to intercede with the woman on his behalf, then it is plain that he meant what he said, and the woman may feel free to seek a new husband. A woman divorced in this way is not, however, so sure of her position as if she had been divorced in court or by agreement at a meeting of kinsfolk and there is always the possibility that her old husband may bring a suit of adultery against her and the new husband. The gift and the husband's statement 'I divorce you' constitute really only a threat of divorce, and a woman who returns to her own people after such a threat and who is not followed by an apologetic husband will, if she is sensible, take steps to clarify her status. Her kinsfolk may go to her husband's kin and discuss the quarrel with them and attempt a reconciliation or they refer the matter to the court.

A man does not need any specific grounds for divorcing his wife and if the marriage has lasted only a short time he may just say that he does not like her or does not want her as a wife. If no marriage payments have been made a man may merely say he is tired of his wife and send her home. The more common reasons given when divorce occurs soon after marriage are that a wife is always quarrelling, is lazy about preparing food, is disrespectful, or is always running off to her own village. Where the marriage has lasted longer, the most common grounds for divorce are adultery by the wife and desertion by the husband.

A woman usually seeks divorce on the grounds of cruelty or desertion. It is not sufficient for her to claim that her husband is a leper, or is mad, or has syphilis, for the court will argue that she ought to seek out the proper medicine to cure her husband. If her husband has been sent to prison, the court will argue that he went against his will and that his wife must wait for him to come out. She is more likely to get a divorce if she can prove that he is continually beating her or that he does not clothe her although he

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apparent ease with which women get divorces and councillors say that they divorce people only because the Administration would interfere if they did not. We can see that in one sense the Ngoni analysis is correct. Whatever may be the precipitating causes of particular divorces, one basic factor is that the old social order in which divorce was rare has been replaced, through a series of events beginning with the White conquest, by a different form of social structure in which wives are relatively mobile from one husband to another. Adultery and desertion lead to divorce because it is no longer necessary to tie down the fertility of women to definite points in a segmentary system based on patrilineal descent, and this is so because the system no longer exists. It is true that the Roman Catholic and Anglican Missions do not recognize divorce but ecclesiastical ceremonies have no force in law, either in the eyes of the Administration or of the Native Courts, and the sanctions utilized by these missions do not entirely prevent their members seeking divorce.

Immediately after a divorce the couple usually wish to have little to do with one another. After the passage of years the hostility between them fades away and they may talk to one another in the ordinary course of village life. They continue to address each other as *husband* and *wife* and their children, although nominally in the custody of one group or the other continue to visit back and forth and keep the parents informed of each other's doings. A woman now married elsewhere may return to her former husband when their son comes home on leave from work. In her old age a woman may even go back to the man from whom she was divorced a long time ago if she has no one else to turn to for shelter and assistance. More frequently she follows her children to where they are living in her former husband's village but has little to do with him directly, only through their children.

8. Co-wives

We have seen that the rights of a man over his wife's sexual activities are different from hers over his. Whereas a woman who commits adultery pays damages to her husband, he does not pay her when he commits adultery. This lack of symmetry derives from the polygynous nature of the Ngoni marriage system. A man can always argue that he is seeking another wife, even if the woman he is running after is married to someone else. It is considered no business of his wife to interfere. She may attempt to stop him but all she can use are domestic and mystical sanctions, she cannot appeal to the law. Again, a wife has no right to the sexual monopoly of her husband and cannot prevent him from taking additional wives except by making his life with her so difficult that he decides to abandon the attempt.

As can be seen from Table III, about one man in seven has two or more wives. Although the Christian Missions do not tolerate

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595 polygyny, and punish their members who take additional wives, 774 there are still a number of Christian polygynists who for most purposes align themselves with the Christian group.

595 As in the old days, the wives of a polygynist are ranked in the chronological order of marriage, the first wife married being the 178 great wife. If, however, bridewealth has been paid, the wives married [583] in this way are all senior to those who are married without it. The arrangement by which a barren or aged wife was given a linked co-wife (*nshanzi*) has now almost disappeared. A young girl may still be indicated as a linked co-wife designate at the gall bladder ceremony of her kinswoman and the intestines placed round her neck, but this is now a mere ceremonial, and the girl marries elsewhere when she grows up. As mentioned above a chief negotiated recently for a linked co-wife on the strength of bridewealth paid by his father, but with no success.

593 A man makes his headquarters in his great wife's hut, and keeps 595 his possessions and money in it. During the day it is considered proper that he should sit and chat or entertain visitors on the verandah of her hut. Her hut is likely to be of better design than those of her co-wives, and she is more likely than they to have a separate kitchen. When her husband returns from a journey, he ought to go first to her hut, and if he has brought back goods from Southern Rhodesia, it is in her house that he stores his loads until he has time to divide them among his wives and relatives. A visitor from afar goes first to the great wife's hut and there asks for the man he is seeking. In her husband's absence it is she who must entertain the visitor. This pattern of precedence is followed to greater or lesser extent despite quarrels between husband and wife, and is not affected by where the husband actually sleeps at night.

595 Apart from this emphasis on the importance of the great wife, the correct behaviour for a man with many wives is impartiality. He must sleep with each wife in rotation, usually for a week at a time, and must not confide in one wife the secrets of his relationship to another. Relationships between co-wives are sometimes strained, and one may use medicines against the others. The medicine[28] [830] believed to prevent a man from achieving erection with anyone other than the woman who gives it to him is sometimes used by one wife against another. On the other hand, some co-wives help each other in their gardens and many polygynists' households run smoothly. Each wife has her own hut and her own garden and it is possible for them to arrange their affairs so that they can co-operate or act separately as they find best. If they persistently quarrel [591] their husband may deem it well for them to live in separate villages, so that for example a man may live virilocally with his great wife and uxorilocally with his second wife, going from one village to the

[28] Possibly known as *ndamanga*. The details of this medicine are not known by many men, and I was unable to question any women on this matter.

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833 Sexual intercourse is the critical activity of marriage. Within the marriage bond it is not merely permitted, it is right and proper and positively sanctioned. All intercourse is dangerous, whether marital or not, and indeed it is perhaps the licit social significance of marital intercourse that leads to the attribution of mystical 843 significance. While a woman is pregnant, her husband can and indeed should sleep with her and with her co-wives, for it is not her husband's mere copulation with others that endangers her child, but frivolous and illicit intercourse with the wife of another or with some woman he has no intention of marrying. The moral code supports the social order, and the infant is born live into a righteous and well-regulated family. Otherwise it will not be born, or be born dead. Thus runs the belief.

5. Christian marriage

794 581 We have noted that, whatever were the intentions of the framers of the 1903 Regulations, Christian marriage ceremonies do not now have any legal significance, either in the Administration's courts or in the Native Courts. They are, however, significant in the eyes of the missions concerned, and sanctions are employed to ensure that all Christians are married in church. Marriages usually take place at the mission itself and there is some sort of preparation beforehand to verify that the couple concerned are aware of the religious implications of the marriage. Important people are sometimes married in a village church and the ceremony is attended by many people. These rites, both at the mission and in the village, involve the local groups of Christians and serve to integrate the members. The barriers against marriage outside the sectarian group might under some conditions lead to Christian or even sectarian endogamy but among the Ngoni this has not taken place. If a couple are anxious to marry and cannot by reason of a religious disparity, the pagan will usually join the church and then proceed to marriage as soon as the rules of the denomination permit. After marriage, a number then cease active participation in the affairs of the church, although they usually continue to regard themselves and are regarded as Christians. The fairly rapid growth of Christianity in the last fifty years makes it impossible to tell as yet whether an endogamous community will be formed. In any case, the Christian community stretches like the rest of Ngoni society to the Copperbelt and the towns of Southern Rhodesia, and there are facilities for Christian labour migrants who wish to marry Christian girls in the towns.

799 [577] The missions have attacked polygyny, the inheritance of widows, the ceremony of 'taking up the child', belief in *mdulo* and pre-marital copulation. In addition, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission has opposed the drinking of beer, and in theory but not as yet in practice, payment of bridewealth. The prohibition on the drinking of beer has led to the exchange of gifts of cooked food between the two sides in the various ceremonies of marriage, without making any important difference to their content and meaning. The missions have had

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797 795 Central Africa. The U.M.C.A. subsequently concentrated its activities in another part of the District, so that the two main denominations are now the Dutch Reformed Church and the Catholic Church. There was for a time a branch of the Livingstonia Mission (Free Church of Scotland) in the area, while more recently a Seventh Day Adventist Mission has begun work. Since 1924 there have been some adherents to the Watch Tower[1] amongst the Ngoni, but this movement did not become important until some years later.

797 872 [875] Primary education is carried on in mission schools subsidized by the Administration, but there is also a Native Authority school over which the chiefs exercise some influence and which is to some extent supported by Native Treasury funds. The teachers in the elementary schools live in the villages, but they do not exercise very much influence outside their classrooms. This does not appear to have been the case in the past, when there was greater hostility between the different missions and when the missions tended to disregard the tribal authorities. The teachers then seem to have set themselves up as headmen on their own, and schools were built without the permission of the local headmen. In many cases where the issue between the missions was undecided, there were two schools in the same village. In the middle 'thirties many of these so-called schools were closed on the initiative of the Administration and the teachers who remain are now more interested in education than in politics.

872 A village school serves more than one village, so that the children of a neighbourhood containing, say, half a dozen villages get to know each other and visit in each other's villages. Certain dances and songs, [535] [533] known as *konsert*, are performed by parties of schoolchildren going from one village to another, and this leads to similar inter-village dancing in the evenings organized by groups of boys. At the end of term a number of schools of the same denomination combine to perform a rather more elaborate programme of songs and dances, and these displays are attended by many adults.

797 ● 794 797 The deacons and evangelists are of greater importance in the political life of the tribe than are the school teachers. Deacons take a certain initiative in settling disputes in the village, and they report to their missions deaths and serious sins that affect their people. They arrange for religious instruction for catechumens and may on occasion organize opposition to some practice that has been declared wrong by the mission. Evangelists are responsible for a number of villages and

[1] The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

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may often be heard in the afternoons blowing their whistles to call their flock to prayer in the local school.

Meetings of all deacons and evangelists of one denomination within the tribe are held every year or so. Permission to hold these meetings has to be obtained from the chief, who may sometimes attend. Food is provided by the local church members and a levy to raise funds for buying a goat or sheep may be made. The initiative at these meetings is taken by the senior deacons and decisions reached are passed on to the members by the deacons. Church services, which are attended by people from many villages, are not only meetings for worship but are also occasions when instructions for collective action are given. For example, a lieutenant was recently suspended by his mission for helping to find another wife for his chief. Church members in his county were then instructed at a church service that they must not attend the funeral of this man or of any of his children.

The tribal area is divided into two zones controlled by the two main denominations, with some overlapping, and this division cuts across the county boundaries, so that people from more than one county have a common interest in a church serving them all. This interest is reinforced by attendance at funerals and prayer meetings in the villages.

The Watch Tower, also known as Jehovah's Witnesses, or in the vernacular, as The Society, is now the third sect of importance in the area. This organization has had a rather chequered career, and has been the target of much adverse criticism from missions, Administration, and chiefs. From the point of view of social structure, it is significant because its organization within the tribe cuts across the county boundaries, because it holds that the teachers of the other denominations are wholly false, because its membership is drawn largely from people who previously belonged to these other denominations, and because no local Whites and few persons of importance in the tribe are members of this sect. In the past, members of the Society opposed the chiefs on principle, but this attitude is not held now, and opportunities are taken to demonstrate their loyalty to the existing order. Meetings are held in different parts of the country every month, and members from other parts are housed and fed by the local members.

Not every person in the tribe has been baptized as a Christian, but the initiative in religious affairs has passed to the functionaries of the different denominations. While the indigenous practices of the people